(b) the status of the progress made in the context of the discussion with Nepal in this regard;

(c) whether there is any proposal at any level to connect the rivers in Bihar;

(d) whether there is any alternative plan to control these rivers causing damage to crores of lives and properties in North Bihar; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Government has taken various steps in the direction of water management to stop the flood in North Bihar coming from the rivers of Nepal. To control the floods in rivers Bagmati and Kamala-Balan in north Bihar, the Government has approved two schemes, namely, (i) Raising and Strengthening of Embankments along River Bagmati at an estimated cost of Rs. 135.16 crore and (ii) Raising and Strengthening of Embankments along River Kamala at an estimated cost of Rs. 52.09 crore.

(b) Government of India has initiated steps for creation of storages in the Nepal territory which will help in mitigating the problem of floods being faced in North Bihar. A Joint Committee on Water Resources (JCWR) headed by the Secretary's of Water Resources of India and Nepal already exists to address the water related issues including floods. A detailed Project Report for the Sapt-Kosi High Dam project and Sun Kosi diversion scheme is under preparation jointly with the cooperation of the Government of Nepal.

(c) to (e) The Central Government has envisaged to make a comprehensive assessment of the feasibility of linking the rivers in the country starting with the southern rivers in a fully consultative manner. It would also explore the feasibility of linking sub-basins of rivers within the States, like Bihar.

Six intra-state link proposals have been identified in Bihar by the State Government of Bihar, namely, (i) Kohra-Chandravat, (ii) Burhi-Gandak-Non-Baya-Ganga, (iii) Bagmati-Burhi-Gandak through Belwabhar, (iv) Kosi-Ganga, (v) Kosi-Mechi (Indian portion) and (vi) Karmanasha-Suara links in Bihar. The State Government of Bihar has commenced the study of these Intra-State links.

Mullaperiyer Dam

1233. PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) the latest position of the "Mullaperiyer Dam" dispute between States of Kerala and Tamil Nadu;

(b) the steps taken by Government to resolve this dispute; and

(c) the progress made in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (c) In this regard, the Government of Tamil Nadu filed a suit in the Hon'ble Supreme Court on 31.3.2006. The Hon'ble Supreme Court passed an order on 25.9.2006 stating "the two State Governments independently or with the intervention of the Union of India may try to sort out, if possible, the dispute". The Hon'ble Union Minister (WR) convened an inter-State meeting of the Chief Ministers of States of Tamil Nadu & Kerala on Mulla periyar dam issue on 29.11.2006 and again with the

Minister concerned of two States on 18.12.2006. No solution acceptable to both States emerged in these meetings.

Further, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu *vide* letter dated 20.12.2007 informed that he had a meeting with Hon'ble Chief Minister of Kerala in the presence of Hon'ble Union Minister for Water Resources on 19.12.2007 where he suggested to oversee the seepage measurement of the dam by engineers not belonging to either of the two States through CWC and Hon'ble Chief Minister of Kerala agreed to consider them. Later, the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Kerala *vide* letter dated 11.2.2008 addressed to Hon'ble Minister (WR) informed that the suggesion put forward by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu to get seepages in the dam examined by the experts has been accepted by the Kerala.

Commercial use of ground water

1234. SHRI N. R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether a hunge quantity of ground water is being used for commercial purposes by the soft drink and bottled drinking water companies;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the water tables are dipping as a result of ground water being drawn by these companies;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the Central Ground Water Authority has laid any norms in this regard;

(f) if so, the main features thereof; and

(g) whether these norms are being strictly followed by these companies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (g) Major share of ground water utilization in the country is for agricultural purposes. The studies conducted by Central Ground Water Board reveal that the water tables are dipping due to cumulative effect of domestic, agricultural and industrial uses, including withdrawals of ground water by soft drinks and bottled drinking water companies.

The Central Ground Water Authority has issued guidelines for regulation of withdrawal of ground water in over-exploited, critical and semi-critical areas. States have been requested to take steps to implement these guidelines.

Grants under AIBP

†1235. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Central Government has made a provision for giving thirty per cent grant under Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP);

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.